

(John - Part 7): John the Baptist's Message

by A.W. Tozer

John the Baptist's message was one of repentance and preparation for the coming of the Lord, calling people to transform their moral condition and prepare for the Lord's arrival.

Duration: 51:57

Scripture: Isaiah 40:3, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 1:4-5, John 1:19-23, John 1:26-27, John 1:29

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the advancements in technology and how they have led people to believe that the world is getting better. The speaker questions whether these advancements in science and toys have also led to an advancement in moral values. The speaker highlights the parallel between the toy makers' dreams of creating modern civilization and the belief that humanity is becoming better. However, the speaker suggests that despite these advancements, there is still a spiritual wilderness in the world and a need for God's voice to be heard.

Transcript

In the first chapter of John, the gospel according to John, the 19th verse and following, and this is the record, this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not, but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he said, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

Then said they unto him, Who art thou? That we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? And he said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord. As said the prophet, he saith, And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

And they asked him and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ? Nor Elias, neither that prophet. John answered them, saying, I baptize with water. But there standeth one among you whom ye know not.

He it is who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoes latcheth. I am not worthy to unloose. And these things were done in Bethabara, beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Now here is the man sent from God, whose name was John. And what he says is of vital and lasting importance. So I beg a hearing for the man sent from God, whose name was John.

Now John gave a frank testimony about himself. It's rather oddly worded here. One wonders why it's worded like this.

Probably there's a lot in it. But it says more than simply John said. It says, He confessed and denied not, but confessed.

I am not the Christ. Obviously the temptation to put himself in the stead of another and to take some lasting glory was very strong. But John gave a testimony about himself.

It was very frank and illuminating. Now he was preaching in the wilderness, that is, he was preaching beyond Jordan, and he was attracting a wide following and getting very much attention. There had been no prophet in Israel for four hundred years.

There had only been teachers. And I have an adjective in front of the word teachers. I wonder if I'll be misunderstood if I use it.

There had been no prophets for four hundred years. Malachi, the messenger, was the last one. And then they went into decline.

And while the Maccabees and John Hyrcanus had come and had been men of military might, there had been no seer, no prophet for four hundred years. There had only been uninspired teachers. There had been no strange voice, no inspiration, only the faithful passing on of the doctrines of the word by teachers, telling what others had seen and heard.

But for four hundred years there hadn't appeared a man who had seen anything himself. He was forced to tell what others had seen. For four hundred years there hadn't been a man who could tell what he had heard.

There had been a long procession of teachers who were faithfully telling what others had heard. But they themselves, these teachers, were seeing nothing and hearing nothing, and for the most part feeling nothing. They were the custodians of theology.

And we thank God they were faithful. They faithfully told what others had seen, faithfully declared what others had heard. But they themselves had neither seen nor heard.

And now they were disturbed, that generation of them, these custodians of orthodoxy, were disturbed by the appearance of a man who didn't fit into their pattern. And they sent to inquire whether he was one of the expected ones. You can discover here, without very much intelligence, you can discover the eschatological background of these teachers, that is, what their prophetic expectations were.

They sent to inquire whether John was one of three expected figures. For evidently, their prophetic expectations only included three major figures who were to appear. They said, are you the Christ? And his answer was very quick and blunt.

He said, no. They said, all right, now, if you are not the Christ, are you Elijah? Because in Malachi they remembered that it said, the prophet Elijah shall appear before that great and terrible day of the Lord shall come. Are thou Elijah? And he said, I am not.

And they said, all right, then, are you that prophet? And again he said, no. And it's almost amusing, if anything could be amusing as sad as this. This exhausted the list of expected ones by these custodians of

prophetic truth.

They had gotten together and sort of agreed, and they'd written books, you know, and gone to school, and had gotten under the influence of the custodians of orthodoxy. And according to these janitors of the holy place, they were to expect three persons, Christ the Christ, Elijah, and someone whom they vaguely called that prophet. That prophet is not really a vague expression, because it's pretty specific, but it said that prophet.

So they had figured out that there was to be a prophet, so outstanding a prophet, that he could be called that prophet. They figured that John the Baptist was to come separate from, and he was to be different from, I mean, Elijah was to come, and was to be different from that prophet. Then in addition to Elijah and that prophet, there was the Christ who was to come.

And that exhausted their list of expected ones. They could have put that all down on a chart very nicely, and drawn crayon pictures of these three expected ones, and then lowered their voices and said in a solemn voice that that was God's last word on this subject. But here comes a man who isn't Christ, and he isn't Elijah, and he isn't that prophet.

And they thumbed over the scriptures and said, We're sorry, we have no reservation for you. We have a reservation for the Christ. When he comes, we have a place for him, and we have also a reservation for that prophet when he comes, but we have none for you.

We have also for Elijah a reservation, but you haven't sent in your reservation. Where do you fit in? Well, he plainly told them this. He said, I am one foretold in your very scriptures, but you mislaid my card.

You didn't locate me right, and so you're missing me. And I don't like to say it right here, because I don't want to distract from the main flow of what I have to say. But I wonder how we teach prophecy so carefully.

I wonder how many cards we've mislaid, and how far we've missed it, and how many events may take place that you and I haven't any reservation for, nor any place in our thinking to include. Now, he said, I am one plainly foretold in your scriptures. Isaiah foretold me, and you've overlooked it.

I don't fit into your plans, because you want to be let alone. You want the dramatic prophet to come, you want the fiery Elijah to come, and you, of course, want the Christ to come, the King of Israel. But you haven't any place in your expectation for one who will come and disturb you morally.

You want to be let alone. You want God to conform to your religious pattern. You're perfectly willing to go along with God, as long as God will be good and conform to your pattern.

It's taken centuries to work the pattern out, and you've got a long tradition behind you. And it wouldn't be becoming of God to upset your pattern, or destroy your tradition, or do anything that wasn't on your agenda. You want God to approve you, said John, in effect.

You want God to justify you. You don't want a prophet to come, or a voice to come that will disturb you. You want to be let alone.

But I am come to call you to righteousness. I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, preparing thee the way of the Lord. Now, let's look at this wilderness, for that's what I want to talk about mainly, the voice

of one crying in the wilderness.

Now, obviously, as John used it here, it doesn't have the same meaning as it has when it said he was in the deserts until his showing unto Israel. There, the word desert or wilderness was an identifiable, discoverable piece of terrain that one could mark on a map and know where it was to be found. But here, as is very often true in the Bible, after a literal use of a word, there follows a figurative use of the word as an illustration.

Give me to drink, said Jesus to the woman at the well, and she said, how is it that you ask me? And then the conversation went from water to water. After the literal water had been talked about for a while, he said, ask me and I'll give you living water. So he raised our expectation from the physical water to spiritual water.

So here we have the wilderness in which John grew up, and now we have him saying, the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Obviously this is a strong figure of speech, and it does not mean the wasteland where he had lived. It refers to the moral condition of Israel.

For John was not talking about botany and agriculture. He was talking about morality and religion. And he went from that word wilderness straight into moral and spiritual subjects, showing that when he used the word wilderness, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, he referred to the moral condition of Israel.

Now, a wilderness has certain characteristics that might take a whole sermon to declare them. There is the characteristic of disorder. You go into a park and you will find order, but go into a wilderness and you will find disorder.

Then there is waste, for these were deserts, and there were whole sections that had no grass, and there was the waste. And then there was the confusion of it all. You go into a desert, a wilderness such as this, not like our western deserts or not even like the Sahara, but burnt over, beaten out, fallow, filled with greenbriars and all kinds of weeds and a bit of grass here and there, scrubby tree there, just a confused wilderness.

And then there was the purposelessness of it all. You could walk, you can go now through parts of New Mexico and Arizona. I rode through there last spring, and I said to a gentleman after I'd got through, said, Brother, I want to do something for you.

I want to give you New Mexico. And he said, I've already given New Mexico to another fellow. Nobody seemed to want New Mexico, at least not the part that we went through.

It was just a wilderness, a sway-backed old cow with her washboard ribs standing out there. Wouldn't you wonder how she lived on this sparse grass and no water? There she was, just her poor desiccated skin holding her bones together. That's the purposelessness of it.

I wonder what God ever made such a place for. He made it, and it's there. They say about some parts of the West that God made the world and had a truckload of stuff he didn't need and said, Dump it.

And they dumped it out there. I've heard that about several sections. And it seems that the desert is just the purposelessness, the characteristics, the purposelessness of it.

God just dumped it there. It doesn't seem to have much meaning. And then there is the wild, undomesticated quality of the wilderness.

Nobody obeys any law around there. Nobody comes when you whistle, lies down and turns over when you tell them. They're all wild, so we have confusion and disorder and waste and purposelessness all built into the wilderness.

And John had all that in mind. He knew it and knew it well. He said, That's what I see in Israel.

That's what God sent me to tell you is in Israel. But the seeing John saw this. Maybe some of you think that the old brother is beginning to slip and that there is a crack appearing in the well-known dome.

But I think I know what I'm talking about yet. And I think I'm seeing something. And I hope there will be enough people to see it before long that we'll do something about it.

But this seeing John saw what the religious leaders of Israel never dreamed was true. He saw what the faithful custodians of orthodoxy never dreamed was true. They saw themselves one way and God saw them another way and John saw them the way God saw them.

And John and God were right and they were wrong. So it's the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Now it would be a worthless time to be spent here if we were simply to attack Israel on dead and vex our righteous souls with the conduct of Pharisees and Scrabs and Levites and all the rest who have been filling graves for a great many centuries.

But there is a present condition of the wilderness, a condition that parallels that of Israel when our Lord came. And I want to talk about that. You know they told us we have been betrayed by our teachers, tragically, cruelly betrayed by our teachers.

They told us a little while back that the world was getting better. I almost hesitate to use that worn-out cliché, but they said certainly the world is getting better. And they said we know it's getting better because man is able to cure rabies, for instance, and diabetes and other diseases, and furthermore man can do so many things that they didn't used to be able to do.

And because man has become a toy-maker, a brilliant toy-maker, they believed that man also had become a good toy-maker. That is, man is a toy-maker. He can make all kinds of toys.

He can reach up and pull down a jagged lightning and put it in a box or run it along the wires and send you the voice along the wires. And then he can send that jagged lightning out without any wires from place to place. And man has invented toys.

They used to take a wheel and put a spike through it and split a stick and run the spike through the split stick and have a toy. They used to take an old sock that wasn't useful anymore and stuff it with cotton and paint a face on it and have a rag doll for the baby. They were compelled to use plain little toys.

But now we have manufactured wonderful, startling toys. Radio is a toy we have invented. We've invented teleweave, as my friend says, Tee Wee, my Swedish brother.

He talks about Tee Wee. And we have invented Tee Wee. And we have invented deep freezers to give to your political friends.

And we have invented nylon. You can run around now in a suit of glass underwear. And don't think I'm being funny.

It's true. It's true. Don't think I'm being funny.

They make it out of glass now. I read of some fellow who said, I'm, well with Henry Ford, even when he was still alive, he said he went around walking around over, is it Litchfield? All right, Greenfield. He went around, he said, you know that I'm dressed in soybeans from the skin out.

He said, I haven't got a stitch on me not made out of soybeans. So we're able now to take a soybean and turn it into a suit of clothes from the skin out. We're able to take glass, it used to shatter when you hit it, now you can bend over with it and wear it.

And we used to be able to do only minor things. Now we're the toy makers of the world. We make gadgets now.

We make supersonic airplanes that fly faster than sound and make a shattering noise and break the non-elastic glass windows when they rip through the sound barrier. We're the toy makers of the world. And they say, all right, man must be better.

But we have overlooked one little thing, that along with man's strange and wonderful new ability to take the forces of nature and combine them to make modern toys for him, to make life easier, say light instead of the candle, and transportation by supersonic plane instead of by ox cart, and communication instead of by runner or pony express, now by wireless. We have these toys and they led us to believe that along with our advance in scientific subjects, we should also have an advance in moral things. Now I don't know what this proves, but I throw it out for what it may prove to a sharp mind ready to hear.

I wonder if it isn't very strange that two things paralleled each other. The toy maker's dream, the invention of all the gadgets and toys that we now have, that we call modern civilization, that came and paralleling that, paralleling it the same time and in the same places among the same people, like two rails of the same railroad track running side by side and going the same places, there came the most frightening and frightful, incredibly cruel and wicked state of affairs that has ever been since the days of Noah. I refer particularly to two ideologies that have been born or hatched out of hell within the last years and coming almost at the same time as the industrial revolution that has given us the toys.

I refer to Nazism and communism. You know along with these two godless dreams, political dreams, there came a carelessness about human life. Nobody is sacred except the members of the party.

And so there can be gas chambers and pogroms and massacres and purges and starvations and concentration camps and brutalities and murders and death marches, and these have taken place in the same areas where we have been doing our most wonderful inventing. So that instead of our new ability to make toys making us better, it has left us no better, and for some strange reason that may not have done it, and I don't want to be quoted as saying that science has made us bad. I only want to be quoted as and understood that meaning that science has not made us any better and something else has made us worse.

There hasn't been anything as bad, not Attila the Hun, not Genghis Khan, not any of the cruel tyrants of the past. They were all brokers compared with the scientific fleet plan cold mass murders of the last 20 years. And then, lest we take out our sputtering indignation on Stalin and Hitler, now both comfortably

deceased, let me point out to you that the wilderness has also invaded other realms beside those behind the so-called iron curtains.

I'm not going to mention the place of women and the degradation of women in this day in which we live. There's just no use, and I might as well shut up. There's just no use, because nobody believes it, and to say it is only to have the satisfaction of knowing that you have told the truth, whistled into the wind, and gone to bed, forgotten about it, because nobody listens.

But the degradation of womankind in the last 50 years, all over the civilized world, has been overlooked, excused, and laughed off. But let me tell you something, before the judgment bar of God, it's not a laughing matter. And it's no more a laughing matter than gangrene in a man's leg is a laughing matter.

If a man had gangrene in his leg, and he could get enough people to glorify it, and pay him to exhibit it, and write books and poems about it, and sing giant songs about it, pretty soon we could glorify gangrene. But gangrene will kill its victim just as sure as God lives in his high heaven. And unless he cuts that out and gets rid of it, all of it will kill him.

You can never make terms with gangrene. And when we violate the laws of God, and bring pollution to the poorest springs of the race, and continue to do it, and then excuse it, justify it, and don't repent of it, but build it into our reasoning, and write books around it, write plays around it, and honor it, we're glorifying something that will kill us as sure as we live. Now, I don't know that there'll ever be any change before our Lord comes back again or judgment hits us.

I don't know that. I hope so, but I don't know. And I don't want to abuse young people either.

Believe it or not, I was once young myself. But it seems to me that the rappiest little guy in the whole neighborhood 40 years ago would have just been coming around with the mill stuff now. And the nastiest little scoundrel that was known in all the region around about was just a Sunday school boy compared with the average that we see up and down now.

A fellow, an old fellow, appeared in the Alliance Church in New York City, 690, just above 690, 28th Avenue, just off Times Square one block, appeared the other night all bloody and beaten up. And he said, What's the matter with you? He said, Oh, some fellow's mugging me. Now, you know what mugging is? I hope you never suffer it, and God knows I don't want to, in my state.

But I hope he's weak as I am if he tries it. But any and all, they grab a fellow from behind and just maul the devil out of him. And if he has any money, they take it, and if he doesn't, they have to give him an extra beating up for not having it.

And they did it, surrounded by 8 million people at church time Sunday evening on 8th Avenue, with 65 theaters within a few blocks. The New Yorker only down a little way, Piccadilly over another little way. Great hotels and centers, not too far from Radio City.

Now, I heard the other day of a doctor over here, on his way about his business, I suppose, to help some poor unfortunate, and they grabbed him and did the same thing to him. That's when you say those are just rare examples. I wish they were rare examples.

Hoover, the head of the FBI, and every cop that has any sense at all, any place throughout the country, PTA groups and all groups, and that may be our hope that there may be something left yet, are worried,

desperately worried, because of the condition of youth. Think of the crimes that everywhere are being committed. I'm not much for statistics.

I should have loaded my gun with statistics tonight. But when you think of how many crimes are being committed every minute of the day, how many murders every day, how many murders that are never caught, murders that are never solved, and marriages gone to rot, there used to be only a few jokes. You know, the old generation, the young fellow that hasn't shaved yet will cackle over the joke, and when he's old and rattly and some gravelly voice, he'll still cackle over the same joke, so it comes along dressed differently.

And one of those jokes, of course, is the mother-in-law joke. Another one is the bride's biscuits, which she can't cook right. I saw one on the streetcar transfer this week.

It says, the bride, honey, I'm glad you like your meal. My mother always told me that chicken salad and strawberry shortcake were two things men liked, and he said, yes, which one is this? Now, that has been told from the day that Cain got married and took his wife and knew her. Something like that, down to this present moment.

And I didn't tell it because I like to tell jokes in a poor bit, I just wanted to demonstrate the fact that that old chestnut is still alive. So there are only a few jokes. Now they've added another joke to the list.

A fellow went to steal a sisterhood. One time, one of the great Greek plays, and he came back and said, the only thing that bothers me is they haven't been able to discover a new joke in 2300 years. Well, they've got a new one now.

It's the joke about getting married and getting divorced, getting married and getting divorced. A little girl in Hollywood who says, mama, who is that man who comes in here once a month? Meaning her father, who never shows up. Or other jokes having to do with how many husbands they have and how many wives they have.

Now, there never was a time when people were good, but there was a time when the masters of mankind were ashamed of being evil. But we have degenerated and gotten demoralized to a place where now we make belly laughing jokes out of our evil. Let someone do evil and hide in the night, and God will say he's gone where he belongs into the darkness and will withhold his judgment.

But when the moral philosophy of a whole generation becomes such that he can do his evil and get on the front page, then God will withhold his hand no longer. He will rot from within. So that when we say it's the wilderness, we have our facts before us.

The wilderness is all around about us. Now, that was all. And I would say, thank God for a pure church in the midst of all this night.

Thank God for the pure woman with the light in the midst of this darkness. But I can't say that until the truth. For the Christian church, instead of floating high above it all free and clean, separated from it, her poor old boat has leaked water from every seam.

And the church and the world have become so mixed up that you can scarcely tell one from the other. And the world has so affected our moral standards. The Christians say they believe in Christ and don't change their moral standards scarcely at all.

And these leaders, like the priests and the Levites, they were defending themselves. They wanted to be left alone and approved. They didn't want to be disturbed.

They wanted to go to church because it was so peaceful there. They said, oh, it's so peaceful sitting here in church. Makes me feel so good.

So they wanted to go to church so they could feel so good. But all around about them, the wilderness conditions prevailed. The vast, formless, morally purposeless and vain manners of the day.

And the cowardly leaders made converts. And in our day, we preach the gospel, we say and make converts, but we make to the wilderness. We make converts to the vacuity, to the emptiness.

Now, if God should raise up a John, I don't know that he will. But if God should raise up a John before Jesus comes, one of the first things we may get set for is to be disturbed, deeply disturbed, perhaps even angered. Let's look at it for a moment here.

At this church alone, a common honesty compels me to say, I believe this, and if I'm wrong, God will have to show me. The common honesty requires me to say, that compared with the average church, this church is a good church. I suppose a large percentage of our people are good living people.

A large percentage of them could lead in prayer if you want them to lead in prayer. A large percentage of them could lead a soul to Christ if you ask them to come help this boy to find the Lord. A large percentage of them give of their money to missions and other good works.

They must, or we wouldn't have such an amount of it here coming through our church year after year. So that I must say in defense of the church, that compared with the average fundamentalist church, it must be a pretty good church. But even in this church alone, and those listening to me now, how much of disorder there is.

Compared with what you ought to be, brother, how much of disorder there is in your life. Just disorder in the life and in the heart. How much waste there is in your life.

Waste of the vital gifts of God. Waste of abilities and life and time. How much you waste.

For the wilderness is characterized by waste spaces. Spaces that have gone to waste that are no good to God or man. And even the Christians I'm preaching to now, how many would have to say it's true, Mr. Tozer, my heart is more like a wilderness than like a garden.

It's more like the wild stretches beyond Jordan than it is like the garden of God and the barrenness. I ask you bluntly, if you were to go to meet him or he were to come for you, within the next twelve hours, what would you have to show him for a life spent in his service? Barrenness, that part of the wilderness. Nothing matures in the wilderness.

Nothing grows much. If there's any fruit there, it's scrubby fruit. Any grain there, it's inferior grain.

Barrenness. I ask what have you to show it? Better never have been born than to be born once and only once. But how tragic to be born twice and yet have no fruit to show for our Christian faith.

To go our way never having really done anything. Nobody in the earth that'll thank God you live, you're skinned through by the grace of God. But nobody will be sorry when you go, except your immediate circle

of loved ones, and that's only an emotional attachment.

Nobody anywhere that'll say, I thank God that man ever lived. In parts of Indonesia tonight, there are whole tribes that when all the facts are known, will thank God with shining faith that Jaffrey ever lived. Thank God for such men, but there are not many, and most lives are barren.

And then think of the wild plants that grow in the desert. And think of the wild plants that grow in many lives of those listening to me now. Plants of the flesh and of the world, but they're growing there.

We're supposed to be a garden of God, but we're a formless wilderness in some instances. And those wild plants will only be cut down and thrown into the fire and the drowsiness of it. That's the trouble, the drowsiness that is upon us.

We don't understand. We not wait to see this. We're like a man who's been asleep only a short time and is desperately tired, and the cry of fire, fire, and he partly gets awake, but not enough to know what is going on.

And many a man has perished because he couldn't shake the drowsiness from his eyes in the moment of peril. And a lot of these never repented. Some did, good many did.

So when our Lord Jesus was finally revealed, they followed him, and John the Baptist did not live in vain. But the masses did not. They thwarted the purpose of God and did not repent.

I wonder how it'll be today, whether we can shake off this drowsiness. Do you want to pray strategically with me over the next days? Then join me in praying for God to open people's eyes to condition. Open eyes to condition.

We're so busy with our jobs, and so busy raising our children, and so busy going to school, and so busy keeping up with the program, and so busy reading as much as we think we ought to read, and so busy going so many places, with our little social engagements. So busy that we forget that there is a wilderness, the spirit of the wilderness has settled upon the churches of Christ, as well as upon the great world around us. And there's a voice calling, not I don't fear refer to myself now.

I refer to God's voice, speaking wherever he can speak, through whomever he can speak. God is trying to say to us, a voice, a voice, crying a voice in the wilderness, a voice. And now what are we going to do? Defend ourselves? Or surrender, obey, and say, God, I'm sorry? Will you pray with me that God will disturb us? The old Lutherans used to say, faith is a perturbing thing.

The faith they had was not like the faith we have today. The faith we have today is a very, it's a sedative, it's a pill we take. You believe in Jesus Christ? Yes.

All right, get up here to Mark, New Testament, go your way. And he goes away groggy-eyed, he's taken the sedative of faith. But faith was no sedative in the days of Luther, and was not in the days of Paul.

It was what they called a perturbing thing. And it disturbed me, and jarred me, and shook me, and made me afraid, made me honest. And I pray that it may come back on us.

Will you join me in praying that God will awake us and rouse us from the drowsiness of it all? For there's a drowsiness that lies on the desert, and there's a drowsiness that lies on human hearts, and there's a drowsiness that lies over the Church. Do you think it's a condemnation of churches? No. I believe in every

little bit of good I see everywhere in the world, and I love it.

And I'm the first one to come to its defense. But I still think if God doesn't raise some men who can be voices to disturb, within the next few years that which is now called fundamentalism will be liberalism, and that which is now called modernism will be atheism. For we're on the way down.

If you don't raise Lazarus from the dead, he'll rot. Decomposition asks no questions when one should get started. Cell breaks down, other cell breaks down, gases are released, smell rises up.

Decomposition asks no questions and plays no favorites and has no partiality toward anyone. So when the churches, my church, this church, any church, my home, your home, my heart, your heart, when putrefaction sets in, it goes right on, it finishes the job. Unless the great physician who now is near, thus sympathizing Jesus, is permitted to take his sharp knife and cut it out.

So will you pray for God to open eyes? Open eyes. God is opening eyes, a few eyes here and there. I had lunch this week with an important religious figure in this city.

He sat and told me of what God had done for his soul, filled him with the Holy Ghost and marvelously blessed him. This same week I had a letter from the borders of Burma, four days' walk from the nearest road, poured out in two or three pages of letters. The letter poured out to me his yearning after God that was eating him up, his desire to know God.

Someone else writes from another church, an alliance church far from here. A young man and his wife had gone from this church there, and they had received something here, and they went out there blazed with the love of God, full of the Holy Ghost and zeal. They went to an alliance church, if you please, and they began to testify and needle the young folks to seek God.

The pastor called them in and said, now don't you bother the young people. I sympathize with you and your desire for the deeper life, but let the young folks alone. You'll drive some of them away and we'll deplete our numbers.

But, said they, I come from Chicago. I go to Mr. Tozer's church. Ah, he said, we're not all like that.

And as dead as we are, he still thinks we're fanatics and don't want us to be let alone. Well, I won't let them alone. Don't tend to.

Don't tend to. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, and I pray to God Almighty there may be an opening of eyes on our board, in our Sunday school, in our choir, the two pastors. There may be an opening of eyes.

Will you pray like that in the next day? Oh, God, open our eyes. We're religious custodians of the temple. We dot the i's and cross the t's and count the digits.

But, oh, God, we haven't heard anything or seen anything. We're faithfully telling what others have heard and seen, but we've not seen anything or heard anything. We've not felt anything.

We're only telling what Ezekiel felt and David. My God hears me say this, I'd rather never preach again than merely to be an echo of an echo, a reflection of a light that's long gone. May God save us and help us.

And over the next days, won't you pray? Won't you pray for opening of eyes? Oh, God, open the eyes. Oh, Brother Tom says, don't waste your prayers. Don't waste your prayers, he says, with his Irish accent.

He says, find out what's wrong, then go right after that. I know what's wrong, let's go after drowsiness upon the nations, drowsiness upon the churches, drowsiness upon the wilderness. When we do get a convert, we make a convert to the wilderness.

Let's pray that God will begin a reformation within his Church that will purify and draw out a people, a separated people, a holy people, a spirit-filled people, a biblical people. Whether they're Baptists or Lutherans or Presbyterians, I give not the snap of my finger what they may call themselves, but a separated people, a people called out, people that God can use. Won't you pray like that? They're found, they're found here and there, my friend of whom I spoke, that they write to me, Brother Tozer, too, they tell me, all over they write, seekers after God, and there are seekers after God in this country of ours, but mostly not, mostly not.

We believe in Jesus Christ, get our heels clean, and get our ticket tucked away in our inside coat pocket, which according to our theology we can never lose, and then gaze out the window while the world goes to hell, while we go on our happy way. We're drowsiness of the wilderness is upon us. Let's pray that God will wake us up, and wake this Church up.

Will you do it? And God will wake McAfee and me. We've been praying like that. What's the matter with us, anyhow? Let's pray that God will rouse us, so the prayer meetings will bulge, so that the tears of the people will flow, and so there will be a care, instead of the sleepy drowsiness of the wilderness, while wild plants grow.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/2/SID2094.mp3>

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